

LATVIA

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The Latvian Health Psychology Association (LHPA) was established in December, 2012. Presently, there are 18 members in the Association. In 2013, the LHPA started its work based on the strategic goals and tasks, mission, vision and values, stipulated in the statutes and during the foundation meeting.

(1) Defining and development of the theoretical and empirical fundamentals of health psychology

In 2013, the main goal was to define the conceptual fundamentals of health psychology, actualize the need to train the professionals in Latvia, and to introduce these statements to the Latvian professional psychologists, as well as the whole society.

At the same time, it was important to summarise and publish the information on the present research already performed in the field of health psychology in Latvia. To achieve this goal, the representatives of the LHPS have implemented the following activities:

(a) Preparing scientific and popular-scientific publications.

8 publications have been prepared and published:

- Freimane G., Mārtinsone K., Rasa I., Pavliņa I. (2013) Cukura diabēta pacientu pēdu pašaprūpes veselības uzvedības saistība ar pašefektivitāti, zināšanām par pēdu pašaprūpi un subjektīvās kontroles lokusu. *2013.gada RSU zinātniskā konference. Tēzes*. Rīga: RSU, 119. lpp. (in Latvian).
- Freimane, G., Martinsone, K., Rasa, I., Pavlina, I. Relationship between illness perception, coping style and health behaviour in diabetes mellitus patients. In: *Psychology & Health. Special Issue: Abstracts Supplement: "Well-being, Quality of Life and Caregiving": 27th Conference of the European Health Psychology Society, Bordeaux, France, 16th – 20th July 2013. Vol. 28, Supplement 1*, 2013, pp 154.
- Hartmane S., Mārtinsone K., Sudraba V. (2014) Drāmas terapija no psihoaktīvām vielām atkarīgiem trauksmainiem pusaudžiem rehabilitācijas procesā veselības uzvedības sekmēšanai: pilotpētījums. *RSU Zinātniskie raksti*, 352 – 363.lpp
- Koļesņikova, J. (2013). No narkotikām atkarīgo pacientu personības traucējumu loma rehabilitācijas procesā saistībā ar sociālo problēmu risināšanas izmaiņām: longitudināls pētījums. *Latvijas Universitātes rakstu krājums. Psiholoģija*, 786. sējums, 37-49.
- Kolesnikova, J., Miezīte, S., Osis, G. (2013). Relationship of drug-addicted patients' personality disorders to social problem-solving changes during the rehabilitation process. *Nordic Journal of Psychiatry*, 67 (4), 282-288.
- Mārtinsone, K., Freimane, G., Mihailova, S. (2013) Veselības psiholoģija: jauns psiholoģijas virziens un studiju iespējas Latvijā. *Psiholoģija Mums*, Nr.1, 10.-15.lpp (in Latvian)
- Mārtinsone, K., Freimane, G., Mihailova, S. (2014) Veselības psiholoģija Latvijā: izaicinājumi, to risināšanas iespējas un ieguvums sabiedrībai. *Sabiedrība un kultūra. Rakstu krājums XIV*. Sast. A.Medveckis. Liepāja: LiePA (in print) (in Latvian)
- Mārtinsone, K., Freimane, G., Mihailova, S., Mihailovs I.J. (2013) Veselības psiholoģijas izveides pamatojums Latvijā. Sabiedrība, integrācija, izglītība. Starptautiskās zinātniskās konferences materiāli. 2.daļa. Rēzekne: RA izdevniecība. 593. – 602.lpp. (in Latvian)
- Mārtinsone, K., Mihailova, S. (2013). Veselības psiholoģija veselības aprūpes kontekstā. No: *Latvijas Universitātes Rīgas Medicīnas koledžas 4.starptautiskā zinātniskā konference „Aktualitātes veselības aprūpes izglītības pilnveidē: mūsdienas un nākotne” Anotācijas*. Rīga: Latvijas Universitātes Rīgas Medicīnas koledža, 15.lpp.
- Mihailova, S. Deja un veselība: pētījumu apskats. No: S. Mihailova, I.J.Mihailovs (Red.) (2013). *Deja, kustība, ķermenis. Zinātnisko rakstu krājums*. Rīga: Drukātava, 144. – 169.lpp.
- Navaitis G., Martinsone K., Labutis G. (2013) The Approach towards the Economy of Happiness in the Baltic States. *Outlines of Social Innovations in Lithuania*. European Scientific Institute, ESI Publishing, pp.196- 208.
- Sudraba V., Mārtinsone K. (2014) Narkoloģisko pacientu sociālā intelekta rādītāji. *RSU Zinātniskie raksti*. (in Latvian)

- Sudraba V., Mārtinsone K. (2013) Narkoloģisko pacientu sociālais intelekts. *2013.gada RSU zinātniskā konference. Tēzes*. Rīga: RSU, 118. lpp. (in Latvian)
- Upenieks R., Mārtinsone K., Freimane G. (2013) Veselības psiholoģija – veselības aprūpes sistēmas sastāvdaļa. *2013.gada RSU zinātniskā konference. Tēzes*. Rīga: RSU, 434.lpp. (in Latvian)

(b) Participation in scientific and practical conferences.

The representatives of the LHPA have presented 12 reports at the international psychology conferences – at the annual conference of the European Health Psychology Association in Bordeaux (France); Riga Stradiņš University Scientific conference; Riga Stradiņš University International Multidisciplinary conference *Sabiedrība. Veselība. Labklājība* (Society. Health. Welfare); Liepāja University International conference *Sabiedrība un Kultūra* (Society and Culture); Rēzekne Higher Education Institution International conference *Sabiedrība, integrācija, izglītība* (Society, integration, education).

(2) Facilitating of the awareness on health psychology among the population of Latvia

(a) The population of Latvia is able to learn about the development of the new field through **the website created by the LHPA** (www.veselibaspsihologija.lv).

(b) Initiative to start organising the Psychology day in Latvia.

- The Psychology days had been organised by 7 Latvian professional organisations of psychologists, as well as 5 Latvian higher education institutions involved in the training of psychologists offering the study programmes (more information on www.psihologijasdienas.lv). 13 LHPA members took part in organising the Psychology day (Kristīne Mārtinsone, Gunta Freimane, Kristīne Vende, Anda Upmale, Indra Majore-Dūšele, Anna Kašina, Jeļena Koļesņikova, Sandra Hartmane, Aelita Vagale, Anita Pipere, Reinis Upenieks, Zane Ozoliņa, Sandra Dzilna).
- Within the framework of the Psychology days, the LHPA organised 8 activities, including International Conference PSYCHOLOGY IN HEALTHCARE in cooperation with the Latvian Association of Clinical Psychologists (LACP). At this conference, 9 members of the LHPA presented reports related to the field of health psychology. About 120 participants took part in the conference. They represented all the professional psychology organisations and higher education institutions involved in the training of psychologists. Prof. Paul Norman (The University of Sheffield, Dept. of Psychology; President, European Health Psychology Society (2010-2012); Editor-in-Chief, *Psychology and Health* (2001-2006) has attended the conference and was keynote speaker. Prof. Norman have contributed to the development of the health psychology in Latvia a lot, because during the conference he gave a detailed explanation of what the aims and objectives health psychology are, as well as participated in methodological discussions about what are the differences / borders for the health psychology and clinical psychology.
- During the Psychology days, Professor Paul Norman with the University of Sheffield led a master class on *Factors Influencing the Human Behaviour Associated to Health, and how to Change this Behaviour*. Workshop led by Professor Norman has been the first major event dedicated to the further education in health psychology for psychologists in Latvia.
- Within the framework of the Psychology days, the contacts with the WHO head of the Latvian office Dr. Aiga Rūrāne have been strengthened in association with facilitation of the role of health psychology in public health.

A wide range of psychologists and the representatives of other caring professions, as well as the representatives of the society learned about health psychology as a new branch of psychology and the necessity of its development from the website of Psychology days (www.psihologijasdienas.lv), as well as from the social media networks (Twitter, Facebook) and the information published in press. More than 1000 people attended the Psychology days.

(3) Development of cooperation with professional organisations and concerned institutions

(a) Following the establishment of LHPA in December, 2012, the information on the establishment of the Association, its goals and values was prepared and sent to professional psychological organisations, educational and state administration institutions, as well as to health and public welfare institutions, and to the international organisations. A Memorandum on cooperation with the Ministry of Welfare of Latvia was also signed in order to hold the LHPA as an organisation willing to cooperate in defining the legal acts and policy documents.

(b) Support from the EHPS to ensure the participation of Prof. Paul Norman (UK) in the Conference organised by the LHPA and LACP, and for the master class led by P. Norman. Both two events gave a significant contribution to the future development of health psychology in Latvia.

(4) Facilitation of the involvement of health psychologists in the fields of health, social care, and education

In 2013, as it was mentioned above, it was important to create understanding among the professionals involved in healthcare and other fields on the role of health psychology, its tasks, and ranges of operation. This goal was attained by preparing the publications, presenting the reports at the conferences, organising the conference PSYCHOLOGY IN THE HEALTHCARE and the master class by Prof. P. Norman on health behaviour, and other activities within the framework of Psychology days, for example, on the role of psychologist in the multidisciplinary team in the healthcare.

(5) Development of the legal regulation of health psychology

(a) An important goal in 2013 was to evaluate which changes would be necessary in policy planning documents and statutory enactments accepted in Latvia to prevent the barriers to the development of health psychology, facilitate the training of specialists, and get involved in the labour market and healthcare medium. For that goal, the LHPA has started the analysis and evaluation of the legal regulation of the health psychology and included this information in the prepared publications.

(b) The LHPA together with LCPA initiated discussions within the Latvian Association of the Professional Rehabilitation Organisations and preparation to write a letter to the Latvian Ministry of Health on the changes in the statutory regulations that would be necessary to ensure that health and clinical psychologists are equally involved in the process of treatment.

(c) A members' professional and economic interest advocacy measures have been fulfilled through participation in preparing the proposed Law on the professional activities of the psychologists that was submitted to the Saeima (=parliament) at the end of 2013. In 2013, there were also discussions on the most essential problems of the professional activities of the psychologist, for example, the certification. Collaboration in the discussions on the preparing the proposed law on the professional activities of the psychologists facilitated the recognisability of the LHPA and wider awareness on health psychology in Latvia among the psychologists.

In 2014, the work on evaluation of the legal regulation of the health psychology and preparing the proposals on its improvement will be continued. It is also planned to follow the review process of the proposed Law on the professional activities of the psychologists in the Saeima.

In December, 2013, during the meeting of the member of the LHPA, it was stated that the Association has performed a significant work to attain its strategic goals and tasks, and this should be continued also in 2014, increasing the awareness on the health psychology and its role in the improvement of the public health and quality of life among the professional psychologists, as well as politicians and the Latvian society. An overarching task for the year 2014 – to propose changes to the normative regulation in order to ensure the possibility for the health psychologists to work in the field of healthcare.

THE FIRST PROFESSIONAL MASTER STUDY PROGRAMME WITH THE SPECIALTY OF HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY IN LATVIA

At the end of 2012, the Ministry of Science and Education of Latvia issued a license authorising the Riga Stradiņš University to implement a professional master study programme “Health Psychology” (the director of the programme – assoc. prof. Dr.psych. Kristīne Mārtinsone).

This study programme, similar to the other study programmes in psychology in Latvia, consists of two parts – a general and a specific one. The general part has been created according to the Latvian standard of the specialty of psychologist and the recommendations of the European Federation of Psychologists Associations both concerning the major study courses and the extent of practices. In the general part, the master's students will study theoretical and empirical-based principles of psychology develop practical skills in psychological assessment (evaluation) and consulting, int. al., short-term consulting, cognitive-behavioural consulting and consulting according to other approaches, psychosocial rehabilitation, crisis interventions, et al.

In turn, the specific part has been created according to the specialty, in this case – health psychology. This part of the scope of the programme corresponds to the guidelines developed by the European Health Psychology Society. During the development of the study programme, the experience related to the study programmes in Great Britain, Lithuania, and other countries has been analysed.

Students of the health psychology specialty will study the basic principles and the contents of this field – the scope of the study course addresses the interaction of the various biological, psychological and social processes in the work with different client groups.

The study programme includes writing the master thesis. This programme has been developed to allow the enrolment of both those students who have already finished their 4 year studies and have obtained a professional education, or the qualification of psychologist' assistant, and those who have been studying for 3 years and have obtained an academic bachelor's degree in psychology. In the first case, the master students study for two years, in the second – for three years. According to the statutory enactments of Latvia, those students who complete the education in three years, must obtain a competence of a psychologist' assistant at first.

The training of the specialists begun on September 1, 2013, enrolling seven students.

As regards further development of the study programme, the crucial priorities have been proposed: facilitating the cooperation with colleagues from abroad and teaching personnel from other universities, strengthening the research capacity, development of cooperation with employers, social partners, and professional societies.

The teaching personnel and students have to take the responsibility of the development of the field in Latvia, clarifying the specifics of health psychology and possibilities both among the professionals and interested persons.

On July 1, 2014, Public Health and Social Welfare Faculty at Riga Stradins University has established the Department of Health Psychology and Pedagogy. The head of the Department is Dr. Psych Associate Prof. Kristīne Mārtinsone. The establishing of the Department will contribute to the further improvement of the learning process of health psychology, such as development and implementation of the further education programme.